

FORT PIERRE CHOUTEAU SITE

South Dakota Route 1806, 4 miles north of Fort Pierre

Perhaps the most significant fur trade/military fort on the western American frontier, Fort Pierre Chouteau was the largest (almost 300 feet square) and best-equipped trading post in the northern Great Plains. John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company built the fort in 1832 to support its expansion into the Upper Missouri region. From then until 1857, when the fort was abandoned, activities between traders and settlers on one hand, and native cultures on the other, exemplified the commercial alliances critical to the success of the fur business, and to the acculturation of both societies. When the U.S. Army abandoned Fort Pierre, usable buildings were transported to Fort Randall and the remaining timber was used as fuel for steamboats plying the Missouri River.